



The Real Yosemite

BY

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The Real Yosemite

With Hints for Those Who See

by

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Sweeney

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WERE there no Yosemite with its wealth heaped on wealth of sight and sound and feeling, were skirting along the margin of the beautiful River of Mercy, the only end in view, even then this trip would be a joy to remember.

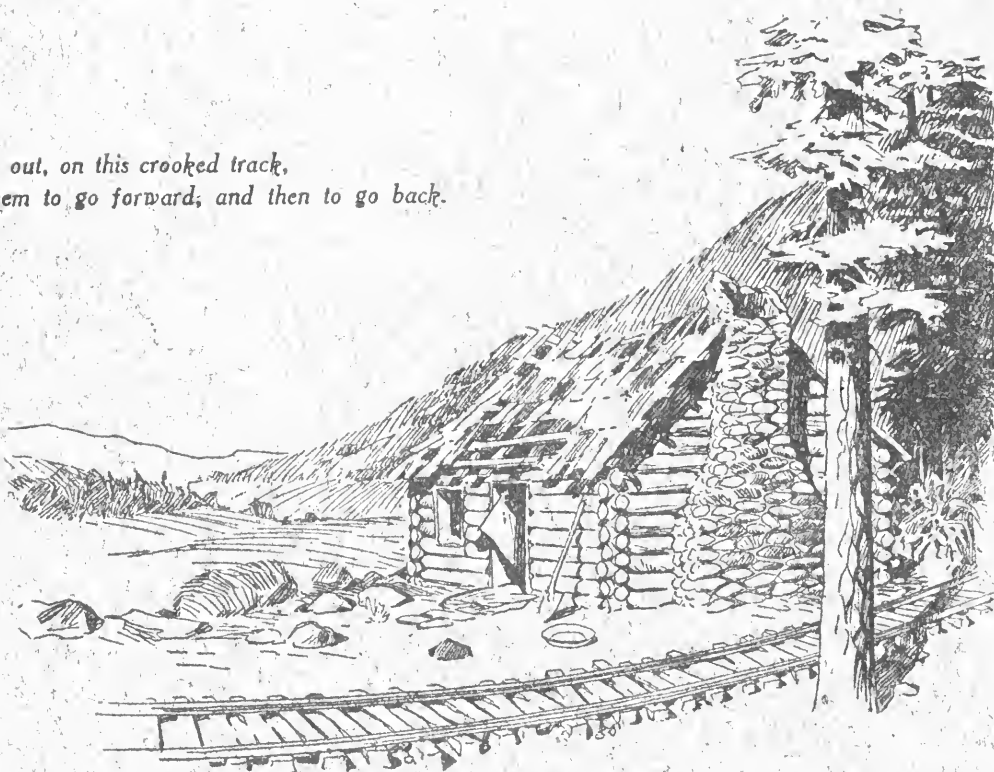
Leaving the plains country at Merced, where the Yosemite Valley Railroad connects with the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe routes, one enters the Canyon of the Merced and begins the ascent to El Portal, the Gateway to Yosemite, eighty-five miles distant. Nearly eighty-five miles of beauty—low farming land and an occasional vineyard, on to the foothills, then the Canyon, rugged, or low-lying with its ever changing, fascinating river, sometimes dashing, white, angry, sometimes dimpling, limpid, seductive as it is in all its length. We are always in friendly touch, now beside it, then far above looking straight down into its alluring emerald depths and shadows.

It is a matter for congratulation that owing to the grades and sharp turns in the track we must jaunt along at a leisurely pace over this part of our journey, particularly that portion taking us through and past the scenes of the early mining excitements.



TAYLOR COL. AUG. 1840

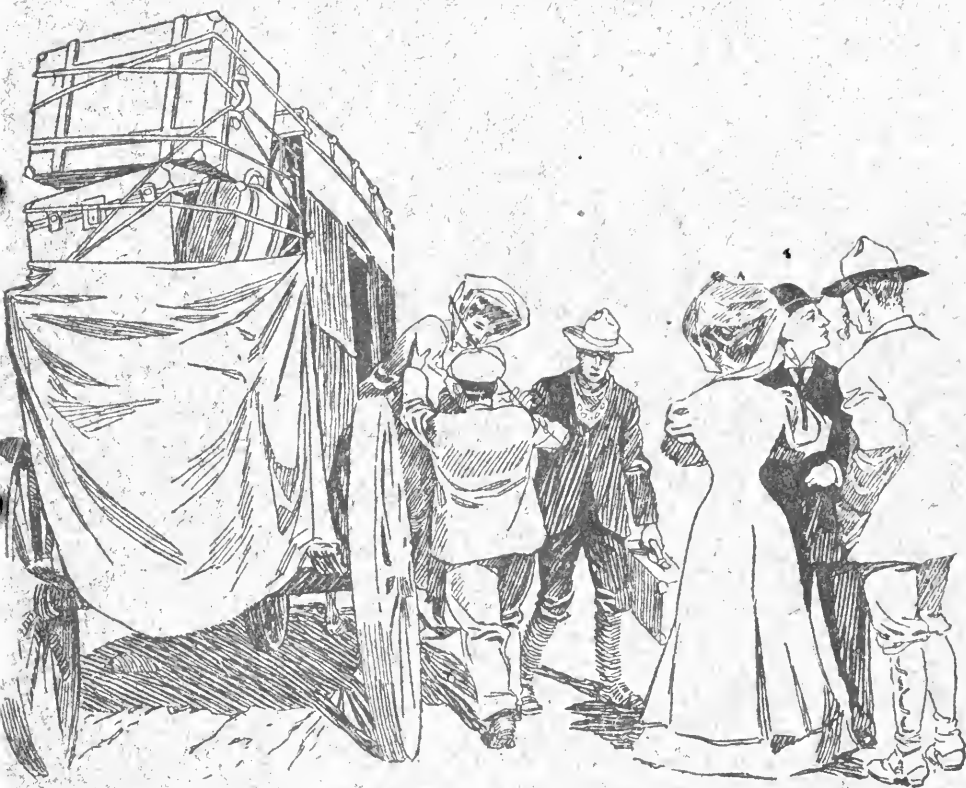
*In and out, on this crooked track,
We seem to go forward, and then to go back.*



HERE at El Portal the river seems a less dominant note, the mountains making a greater claim on our attention. The night spent at El Portal will be a pleasure to remember, and the start to the valley in the cool, fresh morning air promises great things of the pleasures yet to come.

Cultivate your stagedriver. He may tell you things like these: That in 1851 the Yosemite was first entered by white men, by Major Savage and Captain Boling, commanding Mariposa Battalion, in pursuit of troublesome Indians; that the first party of tourists visited the Valley under the guidance of Mr. Hutchings, to whom credit must be given for giving to the world the first news of its wonders in 1855. These and many other things he may tell you, but, in the language of the poet (?)

*"Do not tease your gentle driver,
For he has been known to josh,
And you might accept as truthful
Some things that are simply 'bosh.'"*



*And when they reach the end of the route
The stage pulls up and the folks step out.*

E NTERING the Valley via El Portal or the Coulterville route, the first fall of note is the Cascade. It is at this fall, about six miles from El Portal, that we make one of the first stops and get our sip of Adam's Ale of the real Yosemite brew, clear, cool and sparkling.

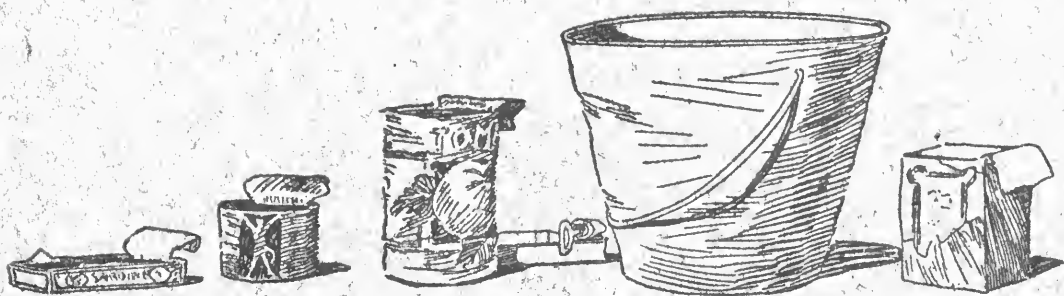
Here we experience the tin cup in its variety.

Cascade Fall is approximately six hundred feet in height, and is, when the streams are running full, peculiarly beautiful and charming from the mist and spray which fills its little canyon and often envelopes its sides, giving the impression of a phantom cataract.

The eight-mile drive from the Cascades to the village is wonderfully interesting—a panoramic view of wonders to which we return to absorb, feature by feature.



*Hear the tintinnabulation of the cup,
As the thirsty beasts and human sup
Adam's Ale for all who wish it,
Although only tin to dish it;
Just listen to the jingling of the cup!*



COMING over the Wawona road, leaving Inspiration Point with its shock of awakening, and driving on down the grade two miles, one stops at Artists' Point. This is a place much loved and frequented by artists—brush, camera, or pen—for here is the best scenic composition.

Stretching away to the eastward is the flat, narrow valley, varying in width from one-half to one mile, and in its entire length about eight miles. The emerald Merced is seen curving in and out through nearly six miles of its course.

Many interesting points of difference between this and other known valleys are here strikingly apparent. The great height of the walls, not only real, but comparative with its width, the remarkable clearness of outline, and the near verticality of the walls are here most impressive.

Not the least of the fascination of the view from this point is its coloring—not from intensity of color, but from the contrast of the light gray, peculiarly luminous walls with the green and an occasional blur of other color, of its pines, firs, oaks, and low-growing shrubs and flowers.

*"Behind me lay the forests hushed with sleep,
Above me, in its granite majesty,
Sphinx-like, the peak thro' silent centuries
Met the eternal question of the sky.*

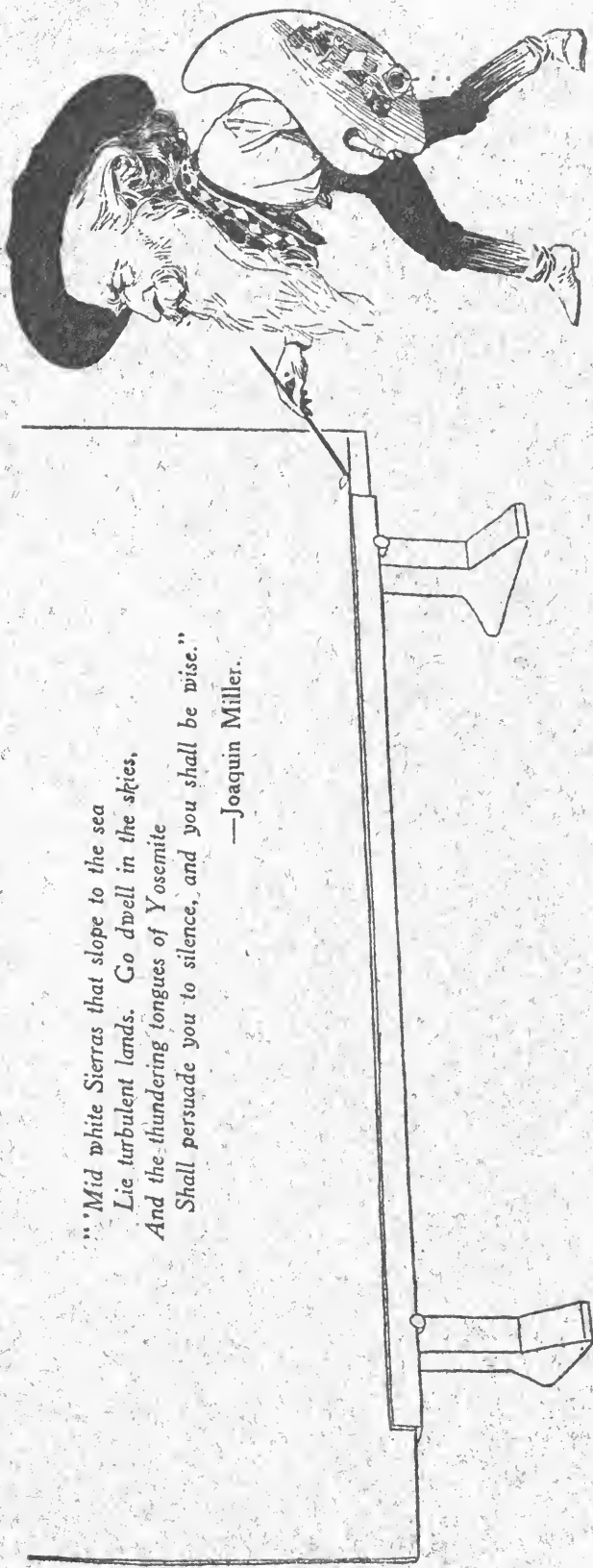
* * * * *

*In the awed silence of this dim, high place,
One keeping vigil might not fear, indeed,
If it befell him as that man of old,
Who in the mountain met God face to face."*



"Mid white Sierras that slope to the sea
Lie turbulent lands. Go dwell in the skies,
And the thundering tongues of Yosemite
Shall persuade you to silence, and you shall be wise."

—Joaquin Miller.



DRIVING on from the Cascades into the Valley, one feels, for the first time since leaving El Portal, a sense of restful enjoyment.

Leaving the mad, racing rapids, whose course we have followed so long, we emerge from the semi-seclusion of forest and low-growing trees and shrubs and stop to absorb some of the quiet beauty of Bridal-Veil Meadows. Here we get the general view of the Valley for the first time. Bridal-Veil Fall, Cathedral Rocks, Sentinel Rock, the top of Half Dome, to the right. On the left, the huge El Capitan fills the picture.

At this point we come on the River of Mercy in one of her happiest moods; in its greater width it spreads out, limpid, the green depths emerging into blue for here a bit of the sky is brought down, an azure mirror for the reflection of the "green things a-growing" all along the banks. The beautiful, fragrant azaleas, some members of the Fern family, dogwood, that sweetest of our flower friends, the wild rose, even the tall, nodding meadow grasses peep into this mirror and know that they are beautiful.

Looking on from this peaceful place, the sense of the grandeur ahead comes to us as a strong voice calling over a deep chasm—softened by distance, but losing nothing of its quality.





" and a sky so fair
Is bending above, so cloudless, blue,
That you gaze and you gaze and you dream and you
See God and the portals of heaven there."

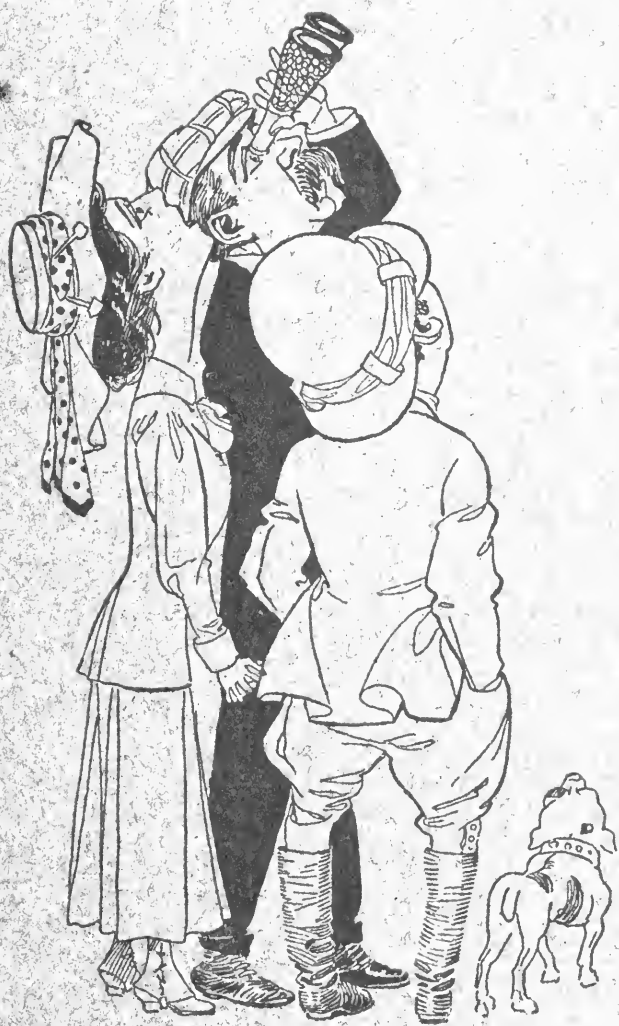
—Joaquin Miller.



EL CAPITAN, the Captain, is an enormous rock, rising three thousand three hundred feet above the floor of the Valley. Even among the high Sierras, where we expect huge, concentric masses of granite, El Capitan is unique, its great height and clear-cut profile giving it a calm majesty never seen in serrated cliffs. Its tremendous proportions are almost incomprehensible. When we say that on its face is an area equal to one hundred and sixty acres, that full-grown pine trees seem as lichen on boulders, we are still at a loss to grasp its true proportions in the scheme of things. While it is possible to reach the top, climbing up a trail which approaches it from the back, the view does not compensate one.

One of the prettier Indian legends centering about this huge cliff is of To-tau-kon-nu-la, a wise and much loved chieftain of the Ah-wah-nee-chees. One day he saw approaching him strangers from the far south, a people different from his, bearing gifts and greetings. To-tau-kon-nu-la had built for them a dwelling, and Tis-sa-ack, the lovely, one of the fair strangers, taught the women of Ah-wah-nee how to make the beautiful baskets still made by them. So charmed was the chieftain with Tis-sa-ack that he wished her to marry him, but this she refused to do, disappearing one night. Impelled by his love for her, forgetting his people, he wandered out through the world, always looking for her, while through many moons his people waited and mourned for him who never came.

*Look up three times, A. B. C. and perhaps D.,
If to the very top you really wish to see,
For in no other way could you expect to scan
The topmost heights of old El Capitan.*



FALLING gently, as if half reluctant to leave its higher estate, Bridal Veil Fall glides over the cliff on the southern wall, a distance of six hundred feet, then in half cascades, rather more than three hundred feet, to the creek flowing into the Merced River.

Its name suggests the character of the Fall—soft, filmy, veil-like, caught in the winds that always play through its course, it is swayed and coaxed into innumerable phantom forms. The sighing and wailing of the winds, the dash and swirl of waters, the weird fantastic shapes seemingly arising from its sea of mist, have given to this cataract, dashing itself to death in the semi-darkness, the name of Pohono, meaning, in the language of the Yosemite Indians, "Spirit of the Evil Wind."

You may visit Bridal Veil during the early hours of the day and find it variously fascinating, but remember that between half-past three and five o'clock in the afternoon it is at its beautiful best, for at this time the sun pays one of his infrequent visits, and rainbows add glory to glory.



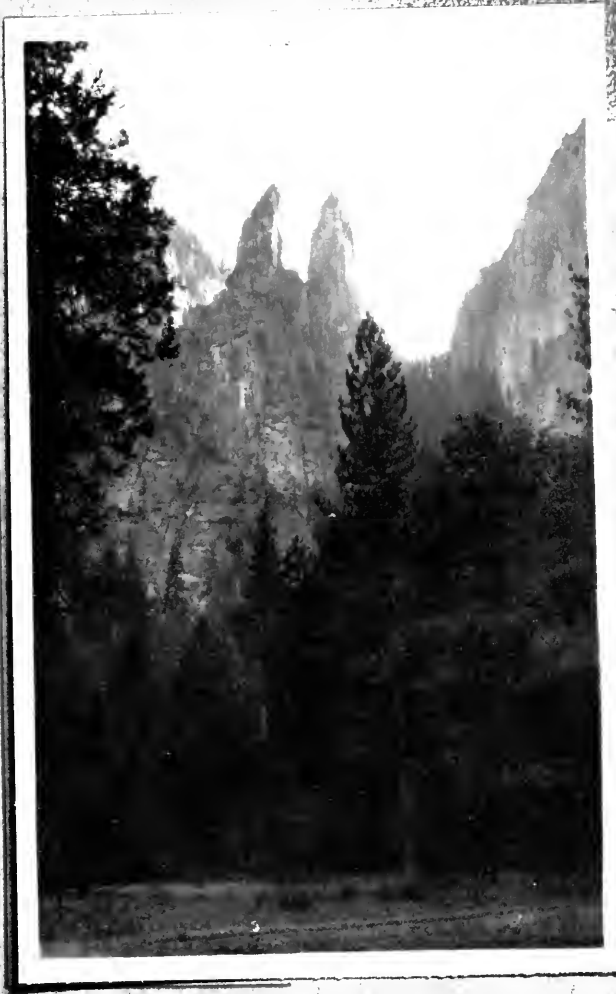
*Here is a beautiful, filmy veil
And gorgeous jewels galore
For the maid who would marry,
I pray you'll not tarry
But haste to the church next door.*



STANDING out at their greater height, but connected at the base, the Cathedral Spires form a part of the south wall of the Valley. Seen from some viewpoints, these spires seem almost, or quite, of equal height, but there is in reality an appreciable difference, the one more nearly connected with the wall being two thousand six hundred and seventy-eight, the other two thousand five hundred and seventy-nine feet high.

Looking from the hollow between the two highest of the "Three Graces," the effect is of one thousand seven hundred feet of solid masonry, topped by the spires. From this point the illusion of an enormous cathedral is most complete.

The effect of these spires varies greatly from time to time; they have a most peculiar way of sometimes standing out boldly, a clear-cut jagged outline against the sky; sometimes seeming to diminish in height and merge into the walls. So far as known, the Cathedral Spires are practically inaccessible, but the walls of the Cathedral itself and all through that vicinity are very interesting, suggesting all sorts of hiding places for goblins and gnomes, or perhaps grizzlies and Indians, who have called these spires Poo-see-nah-Chuck-ka on account of their fancied resemblance to the acorn store baskets of these people.

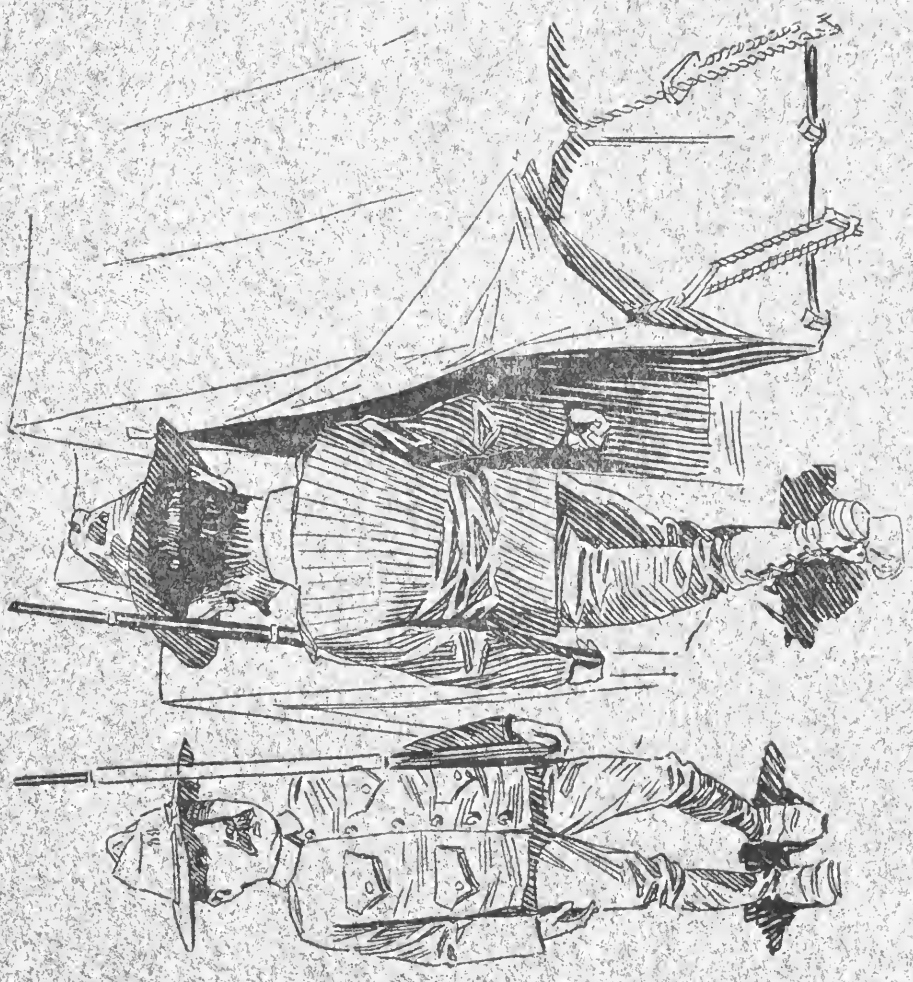


*Come up, come now, ye
youths and all
Who into Hymen's clasp
would fall,
Here maids are, here
church is;
Why should you, then,
wait long for riches?*

THE most beautiful distant view of Yosemite Falls is from Glacier Point trail at a spot seemingly at a height equal to Yosemite's, although early in the season, when the river overflows its banks, the falls may be seen to their entire length in reflection, and it seems that nothing could be more lovely than this nearer view.

Up in the Hoffman group of mountains, ten miles above the top of Yosemite Falls, rises Yosemite Creek, which gathers volume and momentum until it dashes over a dangerously smooth rock at the head of the fall, where it is thirty-five feet wide, down to the first ledge, sixteen hundred feet below. From here on is a series of cascades, sometimes through a dark, utterly inaccessible gorge, sometimes in bright sunlight, making a descent equal to six hundred feet in perpendicular; then comes a final straight leap of four hundred feet to rocks and brooks and ferny nooks, for the lower part of the fall is most approachable and lures one on up into the spray, where a thorough drenching is the worst one has to fear.

There is a theory that in ages past these three parts of the cataract fell without a break, in one sheer drop, the change of contour being due to erosion, but we have nothing to regret in this change, for surely nothing can be more inexpressibly beautiful and impressive than the variety of this fall. In the first fall the volume of water seems too great to permit of its being dashed into spray, the whole stream being impelled from side to side with a peculiar, vibratory, pendulous movement, then the riot of cascades with their butterfly rainbows, then the final plunge, where all the little canyon is shrouded in mist.



LONG ago in the beautiful Valley of Ah-wah-nec dwelt Tee-hee-nay, the loveliest maiden of the tribe, who has loved by Kos-su-kah, a fearless young brave.

Following the custom in Ah-wah-nec, valuable gifts were given Tee-hee-nay's parents, and their consent won to an early marriage, to be celebrated by a great feast. In preparation for the Banquet, Kos-su-kah and some of his friends went into the mountains, to procure venison and other meats. That Tee-hee-nay might have tidings from him, it was agreed that at sunset, Kos-su-kah would go to a point near the falls called Cho-lack, and from this point shoot down an arrow on which would be grouse feathers, one for each deer killed.

At sunset Tee-hee-nay went to the foot of the cliff, hoping to see her lover, but neither lover nor arrow brought her message. With darkness came premonition of evil and she climbed part way up the Canyon, Le-ham-i-tee, where she waited the coming of dawn.

The first rays of morning found her going swiftly up the rocky canyon to the summit, Yosemite Point. Peering over the brink of the precipice, she saw Kos-su-kah's form, broken and lifeless on a ledge, far beneath.

A signal fire summoned her friends and by means of a rope, woven of tamaracks, and deer skin, she was lowered and recovered her lover's body. Throwing herself on his bosom she gave way to one uncontrollable outburst of grief, then fell into a long silence, when her spirit wandered out into Happy Hunting Grounds and they were united, even in death.

Fruit & bark



HALF DOME, North Dome and Washington Column are about two and one-half miles east from Yosemite Falls. North Dome, 3,700 feet in height, rises just behind the Royal Arches, those semi-circle scars cut deep into the face of the southern wall, nearly to its full height of 2,000 feet. Immediately east of the Arches, rises Washington Column to a little over 2,000 feet.

An Indian legend attaching much interest to these domes runs in this wise: Tis-sa-ak, a beautiful Indian woman of the long ago, accompanied by her husband, traveled from a far-off country and entered the Valley weary and worn. Tis-sa-ak trudged on ahead, bearing the heavy burden basket, her husband carrying a staff and a roll of blankets woven of skins. So it happened that Tis-sa-ak, being far ahead, reached Sleeping Water (Mirror Lake) before her husband, and being thirsty, drank all the water in the lake. So incensed was her husband that he beat her cruelly. She wept, and when he followed, and continued beating her, she reviled him, and threw at him her burden basket, woven with such care in the far away home country. For this wickedness they were, while standing in this belligerent attitude, turned to stone. So they stand to this day, Tis-sa-ak, or Half Dome, doomed to stand through countless ages, with tear stained face, gazing at her husband, North Dome, and he, for just as long a time, must endure her fearful scrutiny. The basket lies at his feet and is even now called Basket Dome.



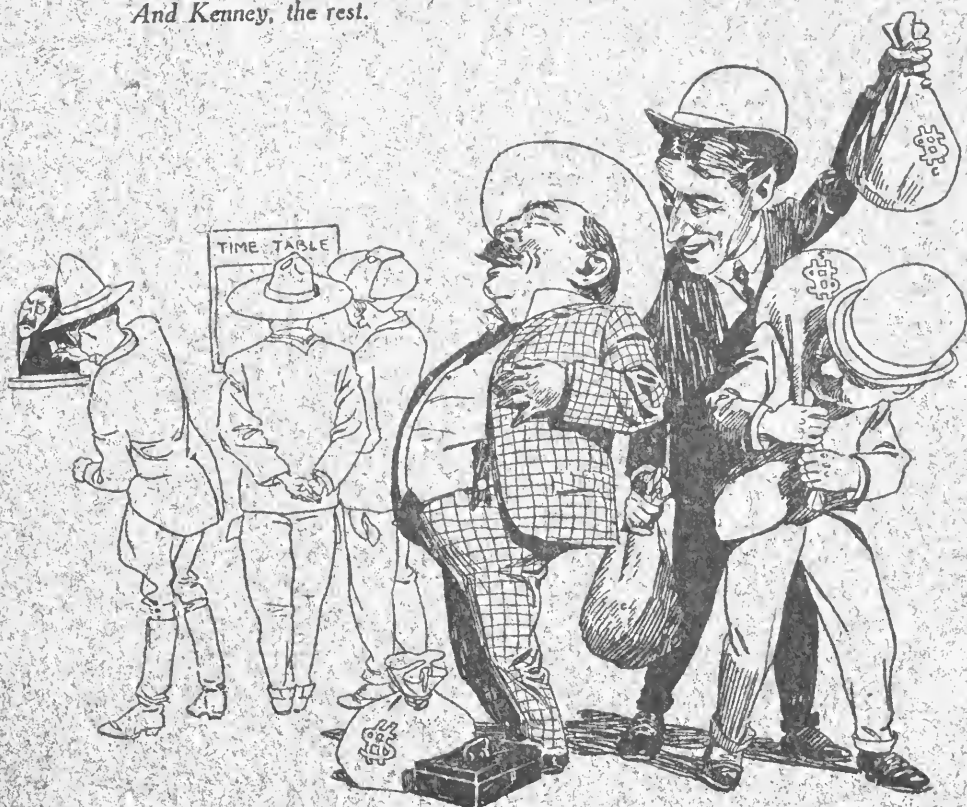
Even a nature usually plastic
MAY resort to measures drastic,
'Though a lack of domesticity
Seems the cause of THIS infelicity.

NO ONE need forego a trip into Yosemite Valley on the score of lack of suitable accommodation, for from the time one arrives at the new and spacious hotel, El Portal, until one leaves the Valley, good and adequate entertainment is assured. At the Sentinel Hotel, which people who have several times visited the Yosemite, regard as an old friend and land-mark, comfort is assured. If the rather less formal life of the camps is desired, there is Camp Curry, Camp Yosemite, and the new Yosemite Valley Terminal Company's camp. The Sentinel, one finds quite in the midst of things, while each of the camps offers some peculiarly desirable feature in relation to the various points of interest. The Terminal Camp is at the foot of the Glacier Point trail near the river bank. Camp Curry is at the base of Glacier Point and Camp Yosemite, across the river, near Yosemite Falls. Those traveling with their own camping outfits have only to apply to our government's representative, Major Benson, for a place in which to pitch their tents; for this there is no charge.

Gentle, sure-footed horses and burros with competent guides can always be obtained by communicating with Mr. Kenney, so in all the essential points, one's comfort is thoughtfully considered.



*Many people there are, both ill and distressed
 Who go to Yosemite for change and a rest.
 They say in the Valley
 (Now is this a jest?)
 That Sells and Cook get the change
 And Kenney, the rest.*



LYING between Washington Column and North Dome on the north and Half Dome on the south, is one of the joys of the earth, Mirror Lake, Ah-wei-ah or Sleeping Water, the Indian name. It is about three miles from the center of the Valley, the road to it is excellent, and takes one through the extreme eastern end.

By all means see the lake before sunrise, as after it the illusion of a perfect mirror is lost. Old Sol plays some queer tricks with us mere mortals as we watch and wait for his appearance. Queerly enough in this elfin place one does not look up, but down, to catch the first glimpse of him, peering down like a vain old satyr into the mirror he is so soon to shatter. Watch him intently, now gliding, now skipping about on and through the water, then look up quickly at your friends, and my word for it, you will see a halo where halo never was before. Nor is the appeal to the sense of sight the only one made in this strange place. Halloo or yodel and your voice goes wandering over the lake, up through the chasms and recesses of the haunted Teneiya canyon, coming ricocheting back to you again and again.



*Legend says a doughty chieftain
Here went out to get a bite
When a great big shaggy grizzly
Round a corner came in sight.*

*When Bruin met his warrior bold
He straightway showed great enmity
The chieftain slew him, so we're told,
And for this was named Yosemite.*



CROSSING the bridge over the south fork of the Merced, near the foot of the trail leading to Nevada and Vernal Falls, we find waiting the trail animals, horses, and burros. Here mount and recrossing the bridge commence the climb.

Passing the power-house of the Yosemite electric light plant, and crossing on a log bridge, we reach the Happy Isles, loved of the leisurely beauty seeker. This is a place peculiarly inviting to rest, for here are sunshine and shadow, warm, sheltered nooks among the rocks or mossy banks and trees in dense shade. Campers, particularly, will find this a beautiful objective. Bring luncheon and perhaps a good book for here one loses the sense of the awful impressiveness, of compelling grandeur, and comes into a little world of quiet and peace.

Blaff, Soler

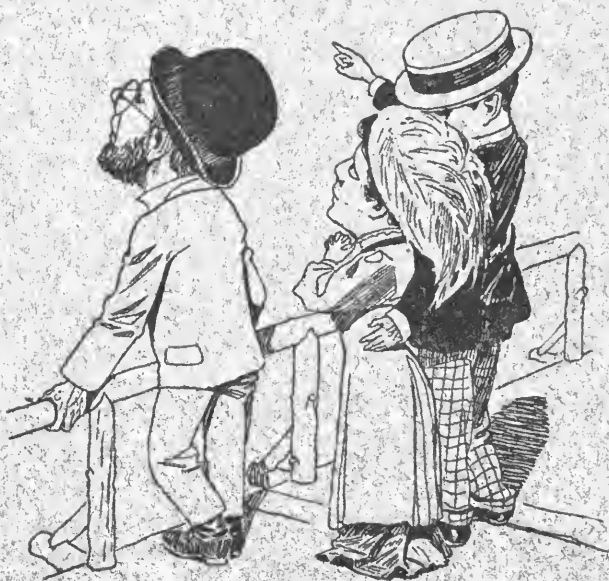
The donk is a sagacious beast.
His skin is made of leather.
He makes the trails most every day
In fair or stormy weather.



WERE all the snowy white and azure blue satins, brocades and velvets, all the diamonds mined and polished since the beginning of time, with millions of yards of the fleeciest tulle woven into one gorgeous tapestry, it must suffer in comparison with this wonderfully beautiful, peculiarly approachable fall. Pi-wa-ack, the Indians call it—the "Cataract of Diamonds," about three hundred and twenty feet high, is considered by many the most beautiful fall in the Valley. It is two miles from the foot of the trail and may be seen by those too feeble to make longer trips. Every foot of this trail holds something of beauty and interest. Here is the wonderful Panoramic Wall of the Merced, a sheer cliff, rising four thousand feet in perpendicular from the river. The look-out at Sierra Point is near this trail. The lovely but almost inaccessible Illilouette Falls, five hundred feet high, can be seen also, and so many other points of beauty that a very long day could be profitably spent between the Happy Isles and Vernal Falls.



*See this line of people
Come here this fall to see
They cannot seem to find one word
So why, I pray, should we?*



WHETHER you have come up through the mists over the Granite Stairway, or have ridden over the longer trail to the top of Vernal Fall, you leave this incomparable thing in its perfect environment with reluctance.

Passing on, one looks down into the cool depths of Emerald Pool, stops beside the Silver Apron, that swift out-pouring of pearls and diamonds, passes the Diamond Cascade and soon reaches the foot of Nevada Fall, where the inn, Casa Nevada, used to be. The luncheon hour is spent here. Continuing, one ascends the "zigzags," and never forgets them.

At the top of Nevada is a plateau, with all sorts of sunny corners inviting to rest, but we all seem inoculated with the spirit of unrest and there is no peace or thought of other things until we have leaned over the iron railing and peered down into the seething caldron, a mad riot of uncontrollable forces impelling the river over the brink of a precipice six hundred feet in height.

Liberty Cap, too, is near Nevada Falls, as is the Little Yosemite, beloved of fishermen, through which you pass on the six-mile trip to Cloud's Rest.



*Upon my word, I almost think
I see this little burro wink
As he pauses on the very brink
Of this high precipice.*

*But let our tourist never fear
Although the beastie goes so near
He only means to change his gait
And hopes to shift a heavy weight.*

THERE are several trips to be taken from Glacier Point, a mile to Sentinel Dome, with its magnificent view of the Valley and adjacent mountains, two and a half miles to the Fissures; then there is the new Pohono trail with its many new "look-offs" at views already familiar from different points. All these and more should be seen if one's time permits, but even when time is limited, do not fail to walk the short distance from the hotel (only about one hundred yards) and see the overhanging rock, projecting from the south wall at a height of three thousand, two hundred and fifty-four feet above the Valley.

This rock, which seems to have so successfully overcome the law of gravitation for countless years, is a nearly flat granite boulder six by nine feet in size, and although it is considered quite safe for two or three people to stand on it at once, it would be better not to be one of a larger number.

The best view of the Overhanging Rock is from the lower overhanging rock about twenty-five yards down the trail toward the floor of the valley.

On the ledge next underlying this rock, if your nerves permit of your peering over its edge, you will see a motley collection of articles, hats, caps, shoes, luncheon boxes in numbers and of many descriptions, cameras, tripods and other things loved of tourists, all scattered about, "pointing a moral," even if not exactly adorning a tale.

"Will you step out on my sun deck,
My very dear Gaston?"

"I would, and thank you kindly,
If I wished to be passed on."

Overhanging ledge



IF YOUR time is very limited, if you can make but one trail, let that be Glacier Point. I walked the entire distance from the center of the Valley to the very pleasant, homelike inn over which Mrs. Lewis so hospitably presides, and could truthfully say, with Mama Squirrel.

"I'm glad I'm here."

It seems impossible that from any other spot in the world, can be seen such a panorama—in the distance the vast expanse of the high (or higher) Sierras, then nearer, Half Dome, Cloud's Rest, Liberty Cap, Mt. Lyell, Mt. Clark, Mt. Starr King, and many other peaks and crags, each one a marvel, varying with its illumination and change of viewpoint. Yosemite Falls, too, forms part of this wonderful view, while to the northeast one looks away into the weird, inaccessible crannies of the Teneiya Canyon. Directly east, is the imperial Nevada Falls, like a resplendent white peacock trailing its snowy plumage over the face of the wall, while farther down, the more companionable Vernal Falls glides into its lower depths.

By moonlight, this view is bewitching; by day, a golden memory; but what words have we, when in the early morning we see this grandeur as through a veil of rose, crimson, gold and amethyst?





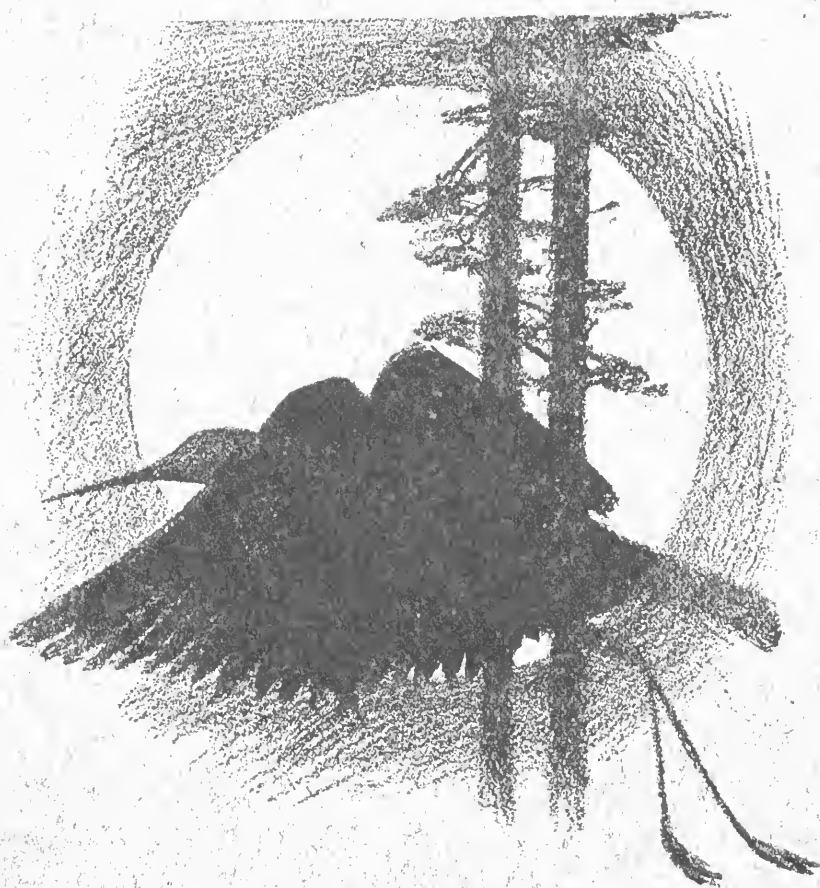
Said Papa to Mama Squirrel:
"What think you of this view?"
Said Mama to Papa Squirrel:
"I'm glad I'm here, aren't you?"



BOUNDLESSLY rich as is Yosemite in form, in color, and the absence of it, in mass heaped on mass, of tremendous proportion, in the appeal of the beautiful in every part of the Valley, to see, from above the clouds, the sun sink below the western level is one of the compensations. Not more beautiful, perhaps, than other sunsets—nothing could be more glorious than when old Sol makes his adieux, on many other days, leaving a trail of prismatic splendor, or throws a marvelous crimson mantle over dome and crag.

In this sunset above the clouds on February 22, 1908, there is no miracle of color. Looking down from the Glacier Point trail, a little way above Moran Point, the Valley is entirely filled with billows of softest, fleeciest white. White is, in fact, a predominant note, for there had been a recent fall of snow, and the misty clouds made the lace-like frills for the snowy garments of the hills.

Nearest, and on the left, the grand old Sentinel Rock stands guard, while on the right, El Capitan stands head and shoulders above the clouds and yet more clouds, until the sense of sight is lost in the feeling of lurid, luminous immensity—a light that never was, on land or sea.



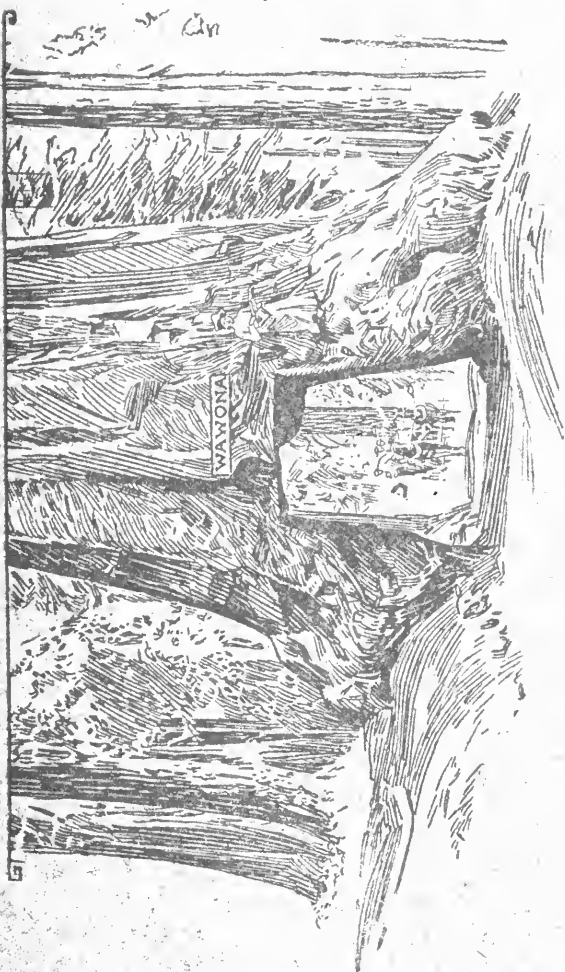
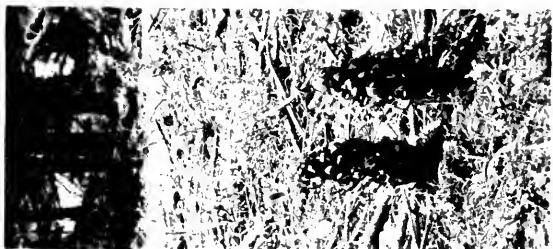
THE Mariposa Grove of Big Trees is of such general interest to travelers from all parts of the world, that a trip into the Yosemite seems incomplete without a jaunt over to this other corner of the Yosemite National Park. Perhaps the most interesting route is that via Glacier Point, over the Chinquapin wagon road, which bears off to the left, taking you through about five miles of this peculiar, tough, wiry, green Chinquapin brush. Emerging from this cut-off, one goes on to beautiful Wawona on the stage road. You will be fortunate, indeed, if your time allows of a stop-over at Wawona, for here is charm and beauty and comfort to tempt you to a long stay. On eight miles beyond Wawona is the grove of what Colonel Irish has called "the oldest vegetable citizens in the world," the Mariposa Big Trees, discovered by Mr. Galen Clark in May of 1857.

There are 606 of these veterans in this grove, or in these two groves, which are one mile apart. Although these monsters seem indiginous to so small a section of our State, the Sequoia Gigantea thrives and makes rapid growth in many parts of America and other countries, the climate of England being peculiarly friendly to it.

By actual count some of these trees have been found to be from 1,300 to 2,200 years old, seemingly everlasting unless destroyed by lightning, fire, or uprooted by high winds.

Of course the patriarch of this community is the Grizzly Giant, a trifle over 93 feet around on the ground and 285 feet in height.

A day is not too much time to devote to the grove, where are hundreds of the beautiful and interesting crimson snow plants, very jealously protected by the Guardian of this part of Uncle Sam's domain.







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